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ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its forty-ninth session, the General Assembly adopted resolutions 49/167 of 23 December 1994 on the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat and 49/222 A and B of 23 December 1994 and 14 July 1995, respectively, concerning the question of women in the context of the Secretary-General's new strategy for human resources management. In those resolutions, the Assembly recalled the goal set in its earlier resolutions, 45/125 of 14 December 1990, 45/239 C of 21 December 1990, 46/100 of 16 December 1991 and 47/93 of 16 December 1992, to accord greater priority to the recruitment and promotion of women in posts subject to geographical distribution in order to achieve by 1995 the targets of 35 per cent representation of women in posts subject to geographical distribution and 25 per cent representation for posts at the D-1 level and above. In resolution 49/167, the General Assembly urged the Secretary-General to implement fully his strategic plan of action for the improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (1995-2000) (see A/49/587 and Corr.1). The long-term goals of the plan of action include the creation of conditions of equality and opportunity for men and women to participate fully in the work of the Secretariat and to achieve gender parity, 50 per cent women in posts subject to geographical distribution, by the year 2000. In section III of its resolution 49/222 A, the Assembly, inter alia, requested the Secretary-General to include full implementation of the plan of action as a specific performance indicator in the performance appraisal of all managers. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to enable, from within existing resources, the Focal Point for Women effectively to monitor and to facilitate progress in the implementation of the plan of action.

2. Over the past year, the Secretary-General has pursued the goals of General Assembly resolutions 49/167 and 49/222 A and B. In particular, the individual responsibility of managers for the effective implementation of the strategies to improve the status of women, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in the Secretariat has been incorporated through the performance appraisal system within the overall system of accountability and responsibility. Training programmes have included components designed to sensitize managers to gender-related issues and to ways in which they can fulfil their individual responsibility to help integrate the gender perspective into all aspects of the work of the Organization.

3. During the past year, strategies have focused on meeting the targets of an overall participation rate of 35 per cent women in posts subject to geographical distribution and 25 per cent women in posts at the D-1 level and above by 1995, in accordance with resolutions 45/125, 45/239 C, 46/100 and 47/93. More forward-looking strategies have also sought to meet the target of 50 per cent women in posts subject to geographical distribution and 50 per cent women in high-level posts by the year 2000.

4. The Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM), through the Office of the Focal Point for Women, participated in the preparatory work for the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995. The elements of the Platform for Action relating to women's participation in decision-making

and in power structures 1/ are particularly relevant to the subject-matter of the present report.

5. The current report is divided into six sections. Sections II to VI contain a discussion of the current situation, recent developments, the new management culture and its impact on women, implementation of the plan of action and conclusions.

II. CURRENT SITUATION

A. Women in posts subject to geographical distribution

6. The percentage of women in posts subject to geographical distribution has increased 1.5 percentage points during the period under review, from 32.6 per cent on 30 June 1994 to 34.1 per cent on 30 June 1995 (see table 1). The percentage of women at the D-1 level and above has increased 2 percentage points during the same period, from 15.1 per cent on 30 June 1994 to 17.1 per cent on 30 June 1995. The major reason for the increase was the concerted effort of programme managers, OHRM and the appointment and promotion bodies to carefully review recommendations of staff put forward for promotion and to ensure that, where candidates were equally qualified, women were recommended and selected. This approach led for the first time to a higher proportion of women being approved for promotion than men, 51.42 per cent during the period 1 July 1994 to 30 June 1995. It may be noted that, while the percentage of women promoted to the D-1 level was only 29.2 per cent, or 7 out of 24 posts, the percentage of women promoted to the P-5 level was 58.9 per cent, or 33 out of 56 posts.

7. The percentage of women at the Assistant Secretary-General and Under-Secretary-General levels remained the same, two at each level, or 11.8 per cent. Intensified efforts will have to be made to appoint or promote women to the higher levels if the target of 50 per cent women in higher-level posts established by the Assembly in resolution 49/167 and endorsed by the Beijing Conference is to be met in the next five years.

8. In resolution 45/239 C, the Assembly, inter alia, urged the Secretary-General to increase the number of women from developing countries. As indicated in table D.1 of the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/50/540), the representation of women in posts subject to geographical distribution as a percentage of all staff in 1995 continued to show imbalances in the same regions and countries of origin reported in 1994. Three regions: Eastern Europe (1.11), the Middle East (1.35) and Africa (3.02) continued to register the lowest representation among the regions. The highest percentages were registered by North America and the Caribbean (9.74), Western Europe (7.87) and Asia and the Pacific (7.63). However, the percentage for Asia and the Pacific reflects mainly the situation in Asia, as the Pacific area is largely underrepresented. The pattern of regional imbalance is also reflected in the percentage of women staff grouped by region of origin as a percentage of women staff only, as of 30 June 1995 (A/50/540, table D.2). Eastern Europe (3.26), the Middle East (3.96), Africa (8.86) and Latin America (9.45) have the lowest representation of women. Higher ranges are found in North America and the Caribbean (28.58), Western Europe (23.10) and Asia and the Pacific (22.40).

Table 1. Number and percentage of staff in posts subject to geographical distribution, 1993-1995

	30 June 1993				30 June 1994				30 June 1995			
Level	Women	Men	Total	% women	Women	Men	Total	% Women	Women	Men	Total	% Women
USG	3	18	21	14.29	2	17	19	10.53	2	18	20	10.0
ASG	1	14	15	6.67	2	16	18	11.11	2	12	14	14.3
D-2	9	57	66	13.64	14	61	75	18.67	14	58	72	19.4
D-1	31	211	242	12.81	34	198	232	14.66	39	188	227	17.2
P-5	103	372	475	21.68	122	375	497	24.55	136	345	481	28.3
P-4	203	463	666	30.48	246	481	727	33.84	234	460	694	33.7
P-3	239	396	635	37.64	240	371	611	39.28	250	379	629	39.7
P-2	209	237	446	46.86	168	201	369	45.53	180	198	378	47.6
P-1	6	1	7	85.71	2	0	2	100.00	0	0	0	0.0
Total	804	1 769	2 573	31.25	830	1 720	2 550	32.55	857	1 658	2 515	34.1

Source: Reports of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/48/559, A/49/527 and A/50/540).

9. During the period under review, four men were appointed to D-2 posts subject to geographical distribution; no women were appointed at that level. Eight men and three women were promoted from the D-1 to the D-2 level. No women were placed in posts relating to peace-keeping, peacemaking or to the international tribunals, at the D-2 level or above. As indicated in the previous report of the Secretary-General (A/49/587 and Corr.1), a Senior Review Group was established in 1993 to review the filling of D-2 posts, with a view to providing the Secretary-General with structured advice that ensures both that personnel policies and recruitment guidelines are consistently implemented and to ensuring that staff members aspiring to these posts are satisfied that their candidacies are given adequate consideration. This Group plays an important role in assisting the Secretary-General to meet the mandated senior-level targets.

10. As part of the Organization's efforts to improve the status of women, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, by a memorandum dated 5 October 1995, requested all heads of departments and offices to apply recently announced procedures for filling their vacancies in a more timely manner and, as part of this effort, to submit quarterly plans for filling a proportion of those vacancies over the next biennium with women candidates. Heads of departments and offices were informed of their department's or office's levels of representation of women in posts subject to geographical distribution and in posts at the decision-making levels, with a view to helping them evaluate the existing situation and to assisting them to set their own recruitment and promotion targets to advance the Organization in reaching Secretariat-wide targets. A recent study prepared in the Office of the Focal Point for Women has shown that, to reach the target of 50 per cent by the year 2000, approximately two of every three vacancies should be filled by women.

B. Women in posts subject to special language requirements

11. As shown in table 2, the number of women in posts subject to special language requirements was 35.4 per cent on 30 June 1994. The level of representation at 30 June 1995 was 35.3 per cent. This represents a decrease of 0.1 per cent, and reflects a slightly lower representation of women at the P-5 and P-4 levels. Within this group, moreover, the staffing complement of certain language services still consists predominantly of male staff. It might be noted, however, that, had the target been applied to posts subject to special language requirements, the Secretariat would have met a 35 per cent representation level for 1995.

Table 2. Number and percentage of staff in posts with special language requirements, 1994 and 1995 a/

	30 June 1994				30 June 1995			
Level	Women	Men	Total	% Women	Women	Men	Total	% Women
P-5	36	95	131	27.5	39	91	130	30.0
P-4	130	211	341	38.1	126	231	357	35.3
P-3	120	230	350	34.3	121	237	358	33.8
P-2	19	20	39	48.7	31	23	54	57.4
P-1	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0
Total	305	556	861	35.4	317	582	899	35.3

Source: Reports of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/49/527 and A/50/540).

a/ It should be noted that posts with special language requirements are from levels P-1 to P-5 inclusive.

C. Women in the General Service and related categories

12. The percentage of women in the General Service category has risen from 56.1 per cent in June 1994 to 57.8 per cent in June 1995. The percentage of women in the combined Field Service, Security Service, Trades and Crafts and Public Information Assistants categories is only 14.5 per cent, having risen 0.4 percentage points from 14.1 in 1994.

13. In order to alleviate the career bottleneck of General Service staff, to respond to proposals made by the Steering Committee on the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat in its first report, and to harmonize the G to P and national competitive examinations, it has been decided that qualified staff in this category should be invited to apply to sit for P-3 national competitive examinations, provided that they meet the same educational, experience and nationality requirements applicable to external candidates. The Secretary-General proposes to do this on an experimental basis during the biennium 1996-1997. Currently, General Service staff may also apply to take the P-2 national competitive examinations, provided that they meet the same criteria.

14. Training opportunities have increased in both number and scope over the past year. Examples of available training provided to staff in the General Service and related categories have included: general orientation programmes; computer training, for more than 3,800 staff, of whom 2,800 were women; training of staff in the Executive Office of OHRM in providing more reliable and timely

responses to the needs of programme managers and individual staff, for 130 staff, of whom 101 were women; and external studies programmes to upgrade substantive skills, for more than 142 staff, of whom 53 were women.

D. Promotion and placement

15. The strict application and monitoring of the special measures announced in administrative instruction ST/AI/382 has yielded a promotion rate of 51.42 per cent for women over the past year (see table 3). This is the first occasion that a rate of more than 50 per cent has been achieved. The special measures require that due regard be paid to achieving gender equality in the Secretariat, even when financial crises or measures lead to periods of down-sizing and/or a freeze on recruitment.

Table 3. Percentage of women promoted through the appointment and promotion bodies to the P-3 to D-1 levels

(30 June 1994-30 June 1995)

Level	Men	Women	Total	Percentage of women
D-1	17	7	24	29.2
P-5	23	33	56	58.9
P-4	29	26	55	47.3
P-3	16	24	40	60.0

Source: OHRM, Secretariat of the Appointments and Promotions Board.

16. Despite the application of these measures, it has been noted that women of all categories tend to stay longer in grade than their male counterparts. This situation will be addressed by OHRM in 1996, in the context of preparing for the triennial review of those staff who have not benefited from the promotion system, as described in the report of the Secretary-General on a strategy for the management of the human resources of the Organization (see A/C.5/49/5, para. 8).

E. Appointments

17. Table 4 indicates the percentage of women recruited after consideration by the appointment and promotion bodies. The data reveal that a higher percentage of women were recruited at the P-1/P-2 and P-3 levels, largely through national competitive and G to P examinations. As shown in table 4, some increases over 1994 levels were also achieved at the P-4, P-5 and D-1 levels.

Table 4. Percentage of women appointed through the appointment and promotion bodies at the P-2 to D-1 levels

(30 June 1994-30 June 1995)

Level	Men	Women	Percentage of women
D-1	3	2	40.0
P-5	4	3	42.9
P-4	14	7	33.3
P-3	21	18	46.2
P-2	26	30	53.6

Source: Report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/50/540).

F. Distribution of women across departments and offices and in occupational groups

18. Table 5 indicates the gender distribution, by department or office, of Secretariat staff in posts subject to geographical distribution. Of the 32 entities reviewed, three have achieved a representation of more than 55 per cent women (United Nations Special Commission, Department of Administration and Management and Office of Human Resources Management); three have more than 45 per cent women (United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, Department of Public Information and Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts); nine have more than 35 per cent women (Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Office at Geneva, United Nations International Drug Control Programme, Department for Development Support and Management Services, United Nations Environment Programme, Department of Political Affairs, Office of Legal Affairs and Office of Internal Oversight Services); 11 have over 25 per cent women (Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, Interorganizational bodies (Joint Inspection Unit (JIU), Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ), International Computing Centre (ICC), Information Systems Coordination Committee (ISCC), Office of Conference and Support Services, Executive Office of the Secretary-General, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Department of Peace-keeping Operations, United Nations Office at Vienna, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, Department of Humanitarian Affairs, and Department of Peace-keeping Operations/Field Administration and Logistics Division); and six have not yet reached a representation of 25 per cent women in posts subject to geographical distribution (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, Economic Commission for Europe, United Nations Centre for Human

Settlements (Habitat), Economic Commission for Africa, Regional Commissions Liaison Office and United Nations Compensation Commission).

19. A recent report of the Joint Inspection Unit, entitled "Advancement of the status of women in the United Nations in an era of 'human resources management' and 'accountability': a new beginning?" (A/49/176), highlighted the uneven distribution of women in various occupational groups. If the level of women's representation of between 30 and 35 per cent and above is considered to form a critical mass, the Secretariat can be considered to have achieved that status in such occupational groups as political affairs, legal affairs, public information, administration, social affairs, economic affairs, human resources and human rights. Numbers alone, however, will neither guarantee that the "glass ceiling" barring access to the upper echelons will be shattered nor lead to a more even distribution of women across occupational groups. As departments begin to look more closely at the desirable mix of occupations within their staffing complement, gender issues must be integrated into strategic human resources planning and greater attention must be given to creating opportunities for women to serve the Organization at the higher levels.

Table 5. Gender distribution of staff in the United Nations Secretariat by department or office and by grade: Professional and higher-level staff in posts subject to geographical distribution

(as at 30 June 1995)

Department/office	USG		ASG		D-2		D-1		P-5		P-4		P-3		P-2		P-1		Total		Grand total	% Women
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M		
35% and over																						
UNDCTD	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	100.0
DAM	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	4	4	6	4	4	2	3	1	0	0	19	13	32	59.4
DAM/GSBM	0	0	0	1	2	1	3	2	7	6	11	11	11	9	9	4	0	0	43	34	76	55.3
25% and over																						
UNJSPF	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	4	7	3	7	8	1	0	0	0	17	10	35	48.6
DPI g/	1	0	0	1	1	4	5	13	14	24	26	35	48	15	22	22	0	0	119	133	252	47.2
DAM/OPPBA	0	0	0	1	0	4	0	4	7	9	13	11	15	14	5	5	0	0	40	48	88	45.5
15% and over																						
DPCSD	0	1	1	0	1	5	2	12	7	14	16	13	8	5	9	3	0	0	40	53	93	43.0
UNHCR	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	5	7	11	6	8	7	3	0	0	22	31	53	41.5
UNOG	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	8	7	7	5	11	13	21	11	13	0	0	38	62	100	38.0
UNDCP	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	6	7	6	1	8	6	3	0	0	17	28	45	37.8
DGHM2	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	7	6	13	16	21	9	9	2	2	0	0	34	56	90	37.8
UNEP	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	3	3	5	1	1	2	3	0	0	9	15	24	37.5
DPA	0	1	0	2	1	7	4	9	12	20	14	22	13	12	4	8	0	0	46	81	139	37.2
OLA	0	1	0	0	1	3	0	10	8	11	5	7	5	9	8	8	0	0	27	49	76	35.5
OIOS	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	3	2	5	8	11	2	7	4	4	0	0	17	31	48	35.4
25% and over																						
DESIPA	0	1	0	0	0	3	1	12	13	10	13	24	9	22	10	15	0	0	45	87	132	34.1
INTOSAI g/	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	6	33.3
DAM/OCSS	0	0	0	1	1	4	4	10	9	14	11	21	9	36	4	12	0	0	40	88	128	31.3
ECSG	0	2	1	1	0	1	3	3	1	3	1	3	1	4	1	3	0	0	8	18	26	30.8
ESCAP	0	1	0	0	1	0	3	9	2	21	10	32	11	30	14	11	0	0	41	84	125	32.4
DPKO	0	1	0	1	0	4	2	7	2	6	6	16	6	6	3	3	0	0	19	44	63	30.2
UNOV	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	5	2	7	4	11	1	11	5	3	0	0	15	27	42	35.8
ECLAC	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	10	7	10	8	32	12	23	9	18	0	0	57	101	160	36.4

/...

Department/ office	USG		ASG		D-2		D-1		P-5		P-4		P-3		P-2		P-1		Total		Grand total	% Women
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M		
ESCWA	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	2	11	4	20	4	6	5	4	0	0	16	45	61	26.2
DMA	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	5	1	11	1	7	3	1	3	2	0	0	10	30	40	25.0
DPKO/FALD	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	8	3	19	5	16	7	9	5	3	0	0	20	60	80	25.0
14% and under																						
UNCTAD	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	23	5	39	9	61	20	37	15	18	0	0	53	161	213	24.6
ECE	0	1	0	0	1	0	2	5	2	14	7	19	6	18	4	13	0	0	22	70	92	23.9
UNCHS	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	3	1	4	3	8	3	9	3	3	0	0	8	29	37	21.6
ECA	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	10	3	32	7	36	13	39	9	13	0	0	33	131	163	19.6
ESCCUN	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.0
UNCC	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	4	0.0
Total	2	18	3	13	14	58	39	188	136	345	234	460	280	379	180	198	0	0	887	1 688	2 815	34.1

Source: Reports of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/48/559, A/49/527 and A/50/540).

It should be noted that percentages for offices with less than 20 staff on board are not significant.

a/ Including information centres.

b/ Including the secretariats of CCAQ, ICC, ISCC and JIU.

III. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

20. During the course of the year, attention was focused on the status of women in the Secretariat in a variety of forms, as indicated in the present section.

A. Administrative Committee on Coordination

21. Following a request by the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat, the Secretary-General took the initiative of placing an item on the status of women in the secretariats of the United Nations system on the agenda of the spring session of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). After an extensive discussion of the item, ACC adopted a comprehensive statement reaffirming the strong commitment of executive heads to ensuring that the advancement of women is a policy priority within the organizations of the common system and to taking the necessary action to improve the status of women in their respective secretariats. The statement addressed measures to facilitate the recruitment of women, encourage their mobility, promote a supportive work environment and foster the necessary attitudinal changes. The statement stressed that management commitment at the highest level is key to the achievement of gender equality goals and that particular attention must be paid to increasing the number of women in senior managerial positions. The statement, which was endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/222 B, is contained in the annex to the present report.

B. Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat

22. The Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat, in its capacity as an advisory body to the Secretary-General, continued to provide support and guidance during the course of the year. This included monitoring the efforts to appoint and promote more women staff and to improve their conditions of work. One of the most important contributions of the Committee during the year was the survey it conducted on the constraints preventing the achievement of the goal of equality for women. Twenty-eight heads of departments and offices, regional commissions, programmes and funds, including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), responded to the questionnaire. The Steering Committee concluded that the survey was also a useful instrument to raise awareness and to sensitize managers. The survey indicated that, in addition to long-standing constraints, restructuring and decentralization, the lack of competitive salaries and limited opportunities for spouse employment were affecting the Organization's ability to meet its targets for the advancement of women.

23. Many of the Steering Committee's recommendations have been incorporated into the Secretary-General's human resources management strategy. These include: recommendations towards meeting the 50 per cent representation target; means to permit qualified General Service staff to sit for P-2/P-3 national competitive examinations; and the need to appraise the performance of managers and supervisors in achieving the goal of gender balance. The Steering Committee

has also noted the usefulness of studying successful practices in other organizations inside and outside the United Nations system.

C. International Women's Day celebrations in Copenhagen and New York

24. On 8 March 1995, International Women's Day, a special celebration was held at Copenhagen on the occasion of the World Summit for Social Development. The event, which was addressed by the Secretary-General, was attended by many heads of State. On 14 March 1995, the Group on Equal Rights for Women, the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute and the United Nations Association-USA jointly sponsored a similar full-day commemoration in New York to honour Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, one of the small number of women delegates at the first session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in London in 1946. Mrs. Roosevelt was also honoured for her contributions to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948. The focus of the day encompassed, as well, the status of women in the United Nations and what has been achieved over the 50-year period. The Roosevelt Institute published Women in the United Nations, 2/ a volume containing the statements made at the 14 March commemoration.

D. Fourth World Conference on Women

25. The culminating event of the year was the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995. In addition to its comprehensive proposals along sectoral areas, the Conference, in its Platform for Action, reviewed the situation of women in decision-making and in power structures. In paragraph 193 of the Platform for Action the United Nations was called on to implement existing and adopt new employment policies and measures in order to achieve overall gender equality, particularly at the Professional level and above, by the year 2000. It was stated that this should be achieved with due regard to the importance of recruiting staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible, in conformity with Article 101, paragraph 3, of the Charter of the United Nations. The United Nations was also requested to continue to monitor progress towards achieving the Secretary-General's target of having women hold 50 per cent of managerial and decision-making positions by the year 2000. 3/

26. With respect to institutional arrangements, the Conference invited the Secretary-General to establish a high-level post in the Office of the Secretary-General, using existing human and financial resources, to act as the Secretary-General's adviser on gender issues and to help ensure system-wide implementation of the Platform for Action in close cooperation with the Division for the Advancement of Women. 4/ This proposal will be addressed by the Secretary-General in the context of his report on the implementation of the outcome of the Conference, to be considered by the General Assembly at its current session.

IV. NEW MANAGEMENT CULTURE: IMPACT ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

A. Accountability, training and gender sensitivity

27. In developing his human resources management strategy, the Secretary-General made a deliberate effort to integrate the objectives set for the advancement of women into the new management culture envisaged for the Secretariat. To date, 4,500 staff at the Professional level and above and supervisors at the senior General Service levels have been trained in the new performance appraisal system (PAS). PAS includes a mandatory performance indicator to evaluate the extent to which managers and supervisors achieve gender balance and demonstrate sensitivity to the multi-cultural environment in their immediate office, as called for in Assembly resolution 49/222 A, section III. Responsiveness, client-service orientation and gender sensitivity are, moreover, emphasized in the people management training programme for senior managers at the D-1 and D-2 levels Secretariat-wide. So that the programme can offer a gender-balanced perspective and training environment, it has been expanded to include women staff at the P-5 level with managerial responsibilities.

B. Measures to combat harassment, including sexual harassment

28. In January 1995, a joint staff-management task force began examining the effectiveness of the Organization's policies and procedures established in October 1992 to deal with sexual harassment in the workplace. The task force recognized that the creation of a safe work environment, as called for in the Secretary-General's human resources management strategy, required that the concept be expanded to address all forms of harassment in the workplace. Despite the added dimension of a multi-cultural environment, instances of harassment in the United Nations workplace, as in the public and private sectors, are often characterized by abuse of power, with victims fearful of retaliation. Preliminary indications received through pilot Secretariat training sessions suggest that staff are extremely reluctant to come forward to report harassment. This would appear to be borne out by the low number of cases of reported harassment submitted since the 1992 policies were effected.

29. The Staff Management Coordination Committee, at its nineteenth session, held at Amman, in June 1995, agreed to a task force proposal to survey United Nations staff to gauge the degree to which harassment exists in the United Nations workplace. The survey will be the first of its breadth and scope, making it a benchmark-setting exercise for the United Nations and its family of organizations and agencies. Staff at all Secretariat, UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA duty stations will be guaranteed anonymity in completing the questionnaire. The survey, which is currently being developed and will be reviewed by a series of departmental focus groups over the next few months, is scheduled for release in early 1996. Existing policies and mechanisms to deal with harassment will be re-examined, and strengthened as needed, in the light of the data yielded by the survey. This activity, when implemented, will assist in meeting the request of the Beijing Conference in its Platform for Action.

C. Consolidation of special measures to improve the status of women

30. While administrative instruction ST/AI/382 on special measures to improve the status of women in the Secretariat is regarded as a landmark document, it was considered that a streamlining and consolidation of all existing bulletins, administrative instructions and other policy issuances on achieving gender balance would increase the efficiency of the special measures and enhance the ability of OHRM to effect and monitor their implementation. The work of an interdepartmental task force has now been completed and the new instruction, to be announced by a Secretary-General's bulletin, is being finalized for issuance in the near future.

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE SECRETARIAT (1995-2000)

31. It will be recalled that the plan of action updated the Action Programme for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat (1991-1995) and incorporated salient aspects of more current human resources development strategies. The Platform for Action adopted at Beijing included, in paragraph 331, a request to OHRM, in collaboration with programme managers world wide, to give priority to key issues relating to the advancement of women in the Secretariat in accordance with the plan of action. The present section assesses the steps taken to implement the measures proposed by the Secretary-General in his previous report to the General Assembly (see A/49/587 and Corr.1).

A. Goals and objectives

32. The long-term goals of the plan of action are to create conditions of equality and opportunity for women to participate fully in the work of the Secretariat and to achieve gender parity by the year 2000. When considering the Secretariat's efforts to achieve these objectives, the following should be borne in mind:

(a) Although the representation of women in the Secretariat has reached only 34.1 per cent in posts subject to geographical distribution at 30 June 1995, thus falling 0.9 per cent short of the target, it is hoped that representation levels will come closer to the 35 per cent target by year's end. Preliminary statistics on the early separation programme indicate that approximately twice as many men as women at the senior Professional levels will separate under the programme. The higher proportion of senior-level posts encumbered by men thus vacated will provide additional opportunities to improve the gender balance at those levels;

(b) The representation of women at the D-1 level and above is 17.1 per cent, falling significantly short of the goals of reaching 25 per cent by June 1997 and 50 per cent by the year 2000;

(c) The goal of establishing recruitment and promotion policies and strategies supportive of the targets and objectives to improve the status of women in the Secretariat has been furthered by the Secretary-General's new strategy for human resources management, outlined in document A/C.5/49/5 and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/222 A. The human resources management strategy, together with the ACC statement endorsed by the Assembly in its resolution 49/222 B, represent important and intentional steps forward in integrating measures to improve the status of women within the overall human resources management policies of the United Nations system as a whole.

B. Implementation of policies and strategies

33. The plan of action, as detailed in paragraph 39 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/49/587 and Corr.1), identified 11 areas in which action is needed. Progress made in each area is discussed in the following paragraphs.

(a) Planning and information/human resources database development

34. Provision has been made for these activities in the restructured OHRM. A new Planning and Development Service has just begun its work. The Service will develop overall human resources planning strategies, by projecting vacancies, determining the staff function requirements of organizational units, inventorying the skills of staff on board and developing strategies to match the two. Performance appraisal and management systems and career development and management systems, including succession planning and targeted training for staff of all categories, are integral elements of such strategies. The Service will also be responsible for the human resources management information system, which will serve as the underlying support in developing systems and strategies.

(b) Networking with other databases on women

(c) Upgrading internal and external rosters of women

(d) Advertising these activities

35. The above areas are among the main activities of the new Specialist Services Division of OHRM, created on 1 September 1995. Searches at a representative number of universities and in various regions have been initiated to identify potential candidates among students from many of the 51 unrepresented and underrepresented countries. The internal roster will, in fact, be a skills inventory. Both the skills inventory and the external roster will categorize staff by occupational groups, thus enabling a more efficient matching of skills and vacancies. This activity, which is to include staff at all duty stations, will be greatly facilitated by the extension of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) to cover all duty stations.

(e) Recruitment missions

36. Although no recruitment missions were undertaken during the period under review, candidates from 31 unrepresented, underrepresented and below mid-point

represented countries participated in the P-2 and P-3 national competitive examinations. In addition, at the Fourth World Conference on Women, the representative of OHRM and the Office of the Focal Point for Women took the opportunity to address a letter dated 8 September 1995 to the 114 heads of delegations representing unrepresented, underrepresented and below mid-point represented countries, encouraging their delegations to submit the names of women candidates qualified for United Nations employment opportunities. All 189 States participating in the Conference received recruitment kits and an OHRM brochure on Employment Opportunities at the United Nations, as well as copies of the report of the Secretary-General setting out the strategic plan of action (A/49/587 and Corr.1), the ACC statement on women (A/C.5/49/62) and a sample recruitment application form. The representative of OHRM, on behalf of the Focal Point for Women, discussed recruitment and gender issues with many of the delegations. Follow-up action includes screening possible candidates for recruitment or rostering.

(f) Management culture

37. With the introduction of the performance appraisal system, the Secretary-General has put into place an important element of the system of accountability and responsibility as set out in document A/C.5/49/1, which was discussed by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. As detailed in section IV above, measures have been built into the performance appraisal system to hold managers accountable for how they deal with gender-related issues.

(g) Mobility and conditions of work

38. Developing and implementing systems of planned rotation by occupational group will be among the tasks of the newly created Planning and Development Service of OHRM. Pursuant to paragraph 6 of General Assembly resolution 49/167, work continues at the level of the ACC Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ) on such matters as the exchange of women staff between the organizations of the common system. The CCAQ task force on work/life issues has discussed such matters as flexi-time and flexi-place, spouse employment, parental leave and child and elderly care as part of the need to recognize that women usually have dual roles in the home and at the workplace. An evaluation of problems relating to spouse employment is being undertaken to identify ways to facilitate the movement of staff, their spouses and families between duty stations. Member States that host United Nations organizations and agencies could assist in this regard by permitting, on an exceptional basis, the spouses of staff members, male or female, the right to work. The ACC statement mentioned in paragraph 21 above envisaged the introduction of provisions to this effect in host country agreements and other efforts in each United Nations location to promote the employment of spouses.

(h) In-service training

39. A number of women staff members have been placed in higher-level posts, thereby gaining greater hands-on managerial experience. After serving in field missions, several women staff members without prior experience in the political area have been able to assume positions as political affairs or humanitarian affairs officers on return from mission. Others, having benefited from the

opportunity of exercising wider responsibilities in the field, have moved to positions of higher responsibility in their own departments in recognition of their acquired experience and demonstrated ability. Determined efforts will be made to record in a more systematic way relevant work experiences in the performance records of all staff and to track the variables (academic background, mission assignment, higher-level responsibilities, the grant of special post allowances and training) in order to facilitate movement across occupational groups.

(i) Career development

40. The work of the recently created Planning and Development Service will also include the systematic development of career development and management systems. As policies and guidelines are set for the career development of all categories of staff in the global Secretariat, the Operational Services Division created on 1 September 1995 will add career development counselling to the package of other services it provides through its seven clusters to all Headquarters departments and offices, offices away from Headquarters and field missions. While career development counselling services will begin to be offered by March/April 1996, the clusters are already providing a broad range of support services, including recruitment, placement and promotion support, staff entitlement and benefit administration and job classification. These services will eventually be replicated in the human resources management units of all offices away from Headquarters.

(j) Training

41. As mentioned in section IV above, training for new staff and for senior- and middle-level managers to develop the managerial skills required to change the Organization's management culture has, over the past year, incorporated gender balance and gender sensitivity and diversity issues. In the short term, OHRM is including in these programmes all staff with supervisory or managerial responsibility. In the long term, such training will be mandatory for all staff.

(k) General Service and related categories

42. The formulation and implementation of career development and counselling systems discussed in paragraph 40 above will broaden the scope and awareness of opportunities for staff in the General Service and related categories. Over the past two years, career development opportunities presented through field mission assignments have been somewhat diminished as a result of the closing of missions in Cambodia (UNTAC), Mozambique (ONUMOZ), Somalia (UNOSOM) and South Africa (UNOMSA) and the down-sizing of other missions. None the less, the remaining field missions continue to offer opportunities to staff in the General Service and related categories. A recent administrative instruction (ST/AI/404) limiting the duration of mission assignments of both General Service and Professional staff to two years aims to keep open the opportunity for the rotation of a greater number of staff so as to maximize the opportunities for individual staff to gain mission experience. The instruction also ensures that posts will be blocked for staff who return on completion of an assignment of up to two years.

43. OHRM also plans to develop a roster of staff skills in the General Service and related categories in order to enhance the Organization's capacity to expeditiously identify and select staff with the required mix of skills for mission and other assignments. A system of regular rotation of staff with finance, personnel administration and recruitment skills has already been implemented for the deployment of staff of OHRM and the Office of Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts, through the Department of Peace-keeping Operation's Field Administration and Logistics Division, to and from a number of field missions.

(1) Other activities

44. With the issuance of administrative instruction ST/AI/399 concerning indebtedness to third parties, progress has been made in ensuring that legitimate obligations arising from court-mandated spousal and/or child support cases are fully respected.

C. Monitoring, appraisal and follow-up

45. Every effort will be made to ensure effective follow-up, and to monitor implementation, of the recommendations for the advancement of women in the Secretariat contained in the Platform for Action adopted by the Beijing Conference, through the sustained implementation of the strategic plan of action. Within the Secretariat, this will entail measures to ensure the equal opportunity of women to participate in the work of the Organization in its broadest aspects; to ensure the equal participation of women in decision-making positions; to give women access to the full range of occupational groups in the Secretariat; and to provide a work environment free of harassment, including sexual harassment.

46. As indicated in paragraph 30 above, the forthcoming issuance of a consolidated and updated instruction setting forth all of the special measures to improve the status of women in the Secretariat will serve as an important mechanism to facilitate the monitoring and appraisal of the implementation of measures to achieve equality between women and men staff members.

47. Departments and offices will be expected to report on their efforts to implement the special measures in the context of the system reaffirmed in October 1995 by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management for the quarterly reporting on departmental plans for filling vacancies (see para. 10 above). This, in turn, will form the basis for a comprehensive monitoring system that will for the first time render feasible managerial accountability to the Secretary-General.

48. The measures required to strengthen policies and systems to identify, deal with and eliminate harassment, including sexual harassment, in the United Nations workplace should emerge more clearly when the results of the Secretariat-wide questionnaire are known, towards the middle of 1996. The questionnaire will be designed to assess the scope of the problem and to analyse the main factors that inhibit staff from coming forward to expose harassment that exists and managers from taking action to redress such situations. Action

will be taken to upgrade, where necessary, existing counselling and support services, as well as the disciplinary machinery, and to establish new policies not only for dealing with harassment but also for creating a supportive culture of civility and respect among all staff.

D. Office of the Focal Point for Women in the Secretariat

49. The Focal Point for Women continues to report directly to the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management and to function as an integral part of his Office. Within OHRM, the Focal Point will continue to work closely with the newly reorganized divisions of OHRM, as follows: with the Specialist Services Division, on executive search, networking and roster upgrading and in identifying qualified women candidates and eliminating possibilities of discrimination; with the Operational Services Division, on placement, promotion, recruitment, career counselling and mediation issues; and with the Planning and Development Service, on succession planning, rotation and career management policies and systems.

50. The activities of the Office of the Focal Point are currently financed from extrabudgetary sources. It has not yet proved possible to place this activity on a more secure footing through funding under the regular budget, and extrabudgetary financing is again forecast for the 1996-1997 budget period. Deep concern exists about the continued flow of such resources, particularly when the Organization is facing serious financial difficulties. Concern has also been expressed that the current staff resources of one D-1 and one General Service level staff are extremely limited in view of the workload related to the implementation of the plan of action, as well as the monitoring, appraisal and follow-up arising from the Beijing Conference. In a letter dated 10 October 1994, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management called upon those 26 Member States that had expressed support for the programme to provide voluntary contributions to strengthen the capacity of the Office of the Focal Point to better implement and monitor the plan of action and to undertake much-needed studies. So far, no Member State has responded to this call.

51. The Focal Point works in close collaboration with a network of departmental focal points, both at Headquarters and in the field, who in turn assist department heads and chiefs of administration or executive offices in monitoring policy implementation and in alerting the Focal Point in OHRM to problems encountered. The occasion of the Fourth World Conference on Women provided an opportunity for the focal points or their representatives from 11 departments and offices Secretariat-wide (Department of Development Support and Management Services, Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development, United Nations Office at Vienna, Economic Commission for Africa, Economic Commission for Europe, Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and United Nations Environment Programme) to meet and exchange views with one another, with the representative of OHRM and with other women staff members and women

representing several agencies and organizations of the United Nations system (United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Fund for Women, United Nations Population Fund, World Food Programme, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations University, International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women, International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT, International Labour Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, World Health Organization, International Fund for Agricultural Development, United Nations Industrial Development Organization and International Atomic Energy Agency).

52. The purpose of the meeting was to exchange views on progress made to implement the strategic plan of action; to seek ways and means to strengthen the effectiveness of the plan; and to review how the ad hoc inter-agency mechanism for examining such issues as system-wide strategies for meeting numerical and qualitative targets for women might be placed on a more regular basis. The recent report of the Joint Inspection Unit, entitled "The advancement of women through and in the programmes of the United Nations system: What happens after the Fourth World Conference on Women?" (A/50/509) also emphasized this need. Meeting participants also exchanged views on methods to (a) mainstream gender issues throughout the programmes of the United Nations in the context of the system-wide medium-term plan for women; (b) improve the status of women throughout the secretariats of the organizations and agencies; (c) prepare analytical studies using common data; (d) maintain regular communications and exchange information and data among focal points and interested staff; and (e) create and maintain advisory support and mentoring systems to apprise women staff, particularly new staff and those coming through the G to P examination, of ways to secure access to the necessary information and advice.

E. Member States

53. Member States, particularly those that are unrepresented or underrepresented and those whose desirable range is below the mid-point or that have few women staff in posts subject to geographical distribution, are encouraged to submit the names of qualified, suitable women candidates for vacancies, which are circulated regularly through the permanent missions or in international journals and media. The Secretariat is determined to reduce the time of recruitment for both successful candidates from the P-2 and P-3 national competitive examinations and those for higher-level posts. To assist in this regard, Member States are encouraged to prepare their own rosters of women candidates by occupational groups. These rosters should be screened in accordance with the guidelines and requirements set out in the 1995 brochure, Employment Opportunities at the United Nations. This will help to reduce the time lag between the issuance of vacancy announcements and the submission of candidates. In view of the low percentage of women at senior levels, Member States are particularly encouraged to include on their rosters and to transmit to the Secretariat suitable candidates for positions at the D-1 level and above as they are announced. Although offers of new appointments will resume only once the cash flow crisis has ended, efforts will continue to identify qualified, suitable women candidates for posts within the United Nations.

54. The Specialist Services Division of OHRM will undertake recruitment missions at universities and conduct executive searches, through professional organizations and agencies. Member States are urged to transmit to the Secretariat the names of appropriate agencies or institutions they would suggest be contacted for this purpose.

55. In view of the very limited resources available to the Office of the Focal Point for Women, the Secretary-General reiterates the request made in his previous report to the General Assembly (A/49/587 and Corr.1) for material support in the form of the secondment of experts from Governments or in the form of resources to assist the Office of the Focal Point in undertaking essential studies for the implementation of the plan of action.

56. The achievement of the goals of the plan of action will require the full support and commitment of all Member States.

F. Non-governmental organizations and professional bodies

57. The United Nations intends to work more closely with non-governmental organizations and other professional organizations in areas such as networking, executive search and exchange of information on gender-sensitivity training, research and other issues. These organizations, world wide, are also viewed as a potential source of candidates for recruitment in the United Nations system.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

58. As the General Assembly considers the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women, it is important that the recommendations of the Platform for Action regarding women in decision-making, in power structures and in managerial positions, to be applied at the national, regional and international levels, be similarly applied to women within the United Nations and its system of organizations.

59. The Secretary-General intends to vigorously pursue the achievement of the objectives set by the General Assembly with respect to the improvement of the status of women through the implementation of the strategic plan of action and the Platform for Action. To this end, the General Assembly may wish to consider extending the target of 50 per cent women and men in posts subject to geographical distribution by the year 2000, as set by the General Assembly in resolution 49/167, to all other categories of posts; namely, to posts with special language requirements as well as field mission and mission replacement posts, irrespective of the type or duration of the appointment, or of the series of Staff Rules under which an appointment is made. The percentage should apply both overall and within each category.

60. Moreover, to address an identified impediment to the advancement of women, Member States that are host countries to United Nations organizations may also wish to consider the proposal in paragraph 38 above, to permit on an exceptional basis the spouses of staff members to work.

61. With Member States as active partners, the Secretary-General hopes to achieve the goal of parity and equal opportunity within the United Nations Secretariat for women and men by the year 2000.

Notes

1/ See Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995 (A/CONF.177/20), chap. I, resolution 1, annex II, chap. IV, sect. G.

2/ Published at Hyde Park, New York, in 1995.

3/ Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women ...

4/ Ibid., para. 326.

ANNEX

Statement on the status of women in the secretariats of the United Nations system, adopted by the Administrative Committee on Coordination at its fist regular session of 1995

1. The members of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) reaffirm their strong commitment to ensuring that the advancement of women is a policy priority within the organizations of the common system and to taking necessary measures to improve the status of women in their respective secretariats. Key to the achievement of gender equality goals is management commitment at the highest levels.

2. ACC is conscious that progress to date has, with some exceptions, been limited. While the overall proportion of women has increased in most organizations, the number of women in senior and policy-making positions remains low. A concerted effort needs to be made to implement existing policies fully, as well as to develop new initiatives to increase the participation of women at senior levels.

3. In the development of action plans, in the context of the overall human resources management strategies of the organizations of the system, emphasis will be placed on clear, specific, short-term targets, preferably at the level of organizational units. Efforts will be made to increase the flexibility with which the system deals with women candidates, to remove obstacles to their recruitment, retention, promotion and mobility and to create a supportive environment. In addition to developing specific policies and monitoring mechanisms, Executive Heads intend to hold senior managers accountable for the implementation of these policies at the level at which the targets are set.

4. In the light of the above, consideration will be given by members of ACC to the following to facilitate recruitment of women:

(a) The feasibility of treating all women staff members of common-system organizations as internal candidates in applying for vacant posts in any organization of the system;

(b) Requesting organizations to utilize their field presences to prospect for women candidates in all disciplines;

(c) In cases where member States are to submit candidatures, urging Governments to submit at least one or more qualified female candidate for each position.

5. In order to encourage the mobility of women, consideration will be given to:

(a) Developing a system for inter-agency mobility of women staff to increase their experience;

(b) Facilitating spouse employment through amending the organizations' staff rules, where necessary;

(c) Encouraging the further development of spouse employment opportunities which encompass not only the common system and other governmental and intergovernmental organizations, but also, to the extent possible, the non-governmental and multinational sectors, as well as introducing relevant provisions in host country agreements; and organizing efforts at each United Nations location to promote spouse employment, led in the field by Resident Coordinators and in each headquarters city by a lead agency.

6. With respect to the promotion of a supportive work environment and to the fostering of the necessary attitudinal changes, organizations will consider the introduction of measures which would lead to a climate conducive to the equal participation of men and women in the work of the organizations. Such measures would be related, inter alia, to the work/family issues currently under review, such as flexible working hours, part-time work, job-sharing schemes, child care and special leave arrangements.

7. In addition, those organizations which have not already done so are encouraged to introduce appropriate policies and procedures to combat sexual harassment.

8. While the focus of these measures remains the advancement of women at all levels, ACC is conscious that particular attention must be paid to increasing the number of women in senior managerial positions.